

Monthly Activity Narrative

Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery (HNFH)

April 2020

Meetings/Training/Events:

- At the end of March, Colorado went into a Stay-at-Home order by Colorado Public Health due to the presence of COVID-19 in the state. The World Health Organization, declaration a Pandemic prompting President Trump to declare a National Emergency and Colorado Governor Polis to declare a Disaster Emergency. Only essential businesses were to remain open. Stay-at-Home lasted until April 26th with limited businesses opening beginning with partial (only 40%) restaurant seating capacity.

Hotchkiss NFH was an essential business. For most of the time the hatchery operated with three employees until April 12. At that time one of our seasonal employees returned to work. So far all are doing well and keeping social distancing when possible.

Mitigation/Recreational Fish Production:

- April- the Hotchkiss crew was busy loading and stocking trout.

Below table shows fish/eggs currently on station at the end of April, blue text means in nursery.

Species	Strain	Number	Weight	Fish/lb.	Size/in
RBT	FLD-ENN-19	21,160	8,397	2.52	9.97
RBT	SSD-WSS-19	83,736	33,229	2.25	9.97
RBT	HxH-CRH-19	88,125	22,424	41.27	3.93
RBT	ARD-ENN-19	100,061	27,414	51.30	3.65
BNT	PRD-BNT-19	100,125	32,508	85.65	3.08
RBT	SSD-ENN-20	163,950	2,067	79.32	3.16
	TOTAL fish	557,157	126,039		

RBT= Rainbow Trout: FLD= Fish Lake Domestic, SSD= Shasta Domestic, ARD=Arlee Domestic, HxH= Hofer x Harrison (Colorado Strain), BNT= Brown Trout: PRD=Plymouth Rock Domestic. ENN- Ennis NFH, and WSS= White Sulphur Springs NFH.

Fish Stocking for April totaled 210,136 trout weighing 48,669 pounds distributed as follows:

Species	Strain	Number	Weight	Size/in	Location
RBT	FLD-ENN-19	40,037	7,870	8	Heron Reservoir, NM
RBT	SSD-ENN-20	56,780	167	2	Crawford Reservoir- surplus
RBT	FLD-ENN-19	30,538	10,974	10	Lake Nighthorse
RBT	FLD-ENN-19	28,393	10,292	10	Blue Mesa
RBT	SSD-WSS-19	30,194	11,027	10	Blue Mesa
RBT	FLD-ENN-19	5,547	1,953	10	Crawford Reservoir
RBT	SSD-WSS-19	18,647	6,386	10	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
	Total	210,136	48,669		

Fish Health:

- The Hoffer X Harrison (HxH) strain rainbow trout started having elevated mortality April 14. These fish are going to Leadville NFH for their production. We didn't want to deliver sick fish to Leadville so we sent fish samples to Bozeman Fish Health Center (BFHC) on April 14th. BFHC could not readily diagnose what could be causing the problem. We sent a second sample of ten fish to BFHC on April 20. As of this writing they could not definitively tell us what was going on with them. Historically the HxH strain have never done real well at Hotchkiss NFH but Colorado DOW prefers this strain based on their resistance to whirling disease. These 75,000 trout are in three different raceways and there is elevated mortality in only two the third is doing fine.

Hatchery Maintenance

- April 9– Valley Restoration & Construction from Montrose, CO, removed approximately 60 foot of six and four inch above ground asbestos concrete pipe. This pipe was removed from its location so another contractor can start on the sand settling basin project in June. Asbestos is considered hazardous material, only qualified companies can move it. Valley Restoration's quote was accepted and they wrapped each segment of pipe with plastic and took it to a hazardous landfill to dispose of the asbestos pipe.



- The hatchery security gate project was out for bid and we had three local contractors come to the hatchery to see what the location looked like. The last couple of years we have had a lot of after hour visitors mainly at night. There is really no reason for any unauthorized guests to be on hatchery grounds at night. We have noticed fishing lures in the fish raceways, signs missing, and more than normal garbage at the public river fishing access area. I have a sneaky suspicion that they are up to no good. To protect property and fish production areas we thought it proper to close the hatchery when we go home for the day with a solar powered swing gate at the top of the hill coming into the hatchery. More on this project when the contract is awarded and work begins on it.
- Signs of our annual springtime friend telling that he is back. For several years during the spring, a bear has been coming to the hatchery looking for food. Normally the bear gets into our dumpster and throws trash all over the dumpster area. We tried strapping the dumpster but the plastic lids caved in from the weight of the bear. We put a raceway fish screen over the lid top to give it rigidity but that didn't work either. We called the game warden and he brought an electric fence charger and attached it to a piece of wire fencing. We turned on the power at night and so far we haven't seen him around.



Personnel

Current employees at Hotchkiss NFH are as follows:

Craig Eaton – Project Leader

Mark Gaub - Bio Science Tech

Dominic Giordullo – Bio Science Tech

One of our two seasonal employees, Katelynn Russell came on in April. She was promoted from a Bio Science Tech GS-04 to a GS-05. We were really glad she received the promotion during the last round of nationwide seasonal hiring, she is a good worker and badly needed this time of year.